Episcopalia:

OR,

LETTERS

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

HENRY,

Lord Bishop of *London*,

TO THE

CLERGY

OF HIS

Diocels,

LONDON:

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1686

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Good Brother,

YOU may remember, that by the help of your ready compliance, we had three Conferences, the last year, upon

the two Sacraments and Catechiſing, in the reaſon of which, that you may be the better provided to ſatisfie ſuch as ſhall enquire, eſpecially thoſe that are immediately under your care. I have thought fit to let you know, in ſhort, what induced me to take this method.

Which was in general, that notwithſtanding the great duty and importance of each particular, with the neceſſary and prudent directions of our Church for their due obſervance, there was ſo great a neglect in moſt places, that the ſubſtance of Religion, unleſs timely remedy'd, would be loſt amorg us.

Baptiſm.

THE firſt Conference we had was concerning Baptiſm, for the performance of which, you are directed by 29 and 30, and 68, 69 and 70 Canons, and the Rubricks contained in the Office for the Adminiſtration of Baptiſm. And to perſwade us the more earneſtly and effectually to proſecute this, we conſider'd, 1. Of how great uſe and experience publick Baptiſm was in the Church, 2. What might be the beſt means to recover the ſhameful diſuſe of it.

1. The great use and expedience did appear from the several advantages the Church receives by publick Baptism, which are all lost in private. 1. There is the joynt Prayers of the Congregation to give a blessing to that holy performance. 2. There is an occasion given to the people to reflect upon their own promises, both which are excrecises of mutual Charity. 3. It makes us not to be asham'd of our vow of Christianity. And, Lastly, It gives that solemnity, which is due to so great a Sacrament, and from which a greater awe and regard is contracted upon the minds of men, who are in a great measure mov'd by the out-

outward appearance, and for the want of which, by being hudled up in private, I fear I may but too truly say it is grown into contempt among us.

That which adds great weight to confirm these reasons, is the constant and universal practice of the Church in all ages; which, however different in the manner, was always attended with two circumstances, a high Reverence to the Sacredness of the Institution, and a solemn and publick Performance: witness the Primitive usage in the burying-places of their Martyrs, where their Assemblies were then held, and afterwards their magnifi-

cent

cent Baptiſtaries, the remains of which, are to be ſeen in ſome Cities to this day. It would be to little purpoſe to quote either Councils or Fathers for this, when there is not a Church, to this hour, that does not appoint as publick an Adminiſtration as its condition can allow of. And if any come ſhorter of this decent obſervation than another, (except ſome wild Chriſtians) it is the Church of *Rome*, which by ſuperſtition has defaced the beauty of it.

2. The way therefore to recover this decent and moſt uſeful practice, and to reſtore the Church to its juſt Diſcipline, is, earneſtly to lay before

fore thoſe who are committed to our care, not only the reaſonableneſs of their duty in complying, but likewiſe the great obligation that lies upon us, eſpecially in obedience to ſo juſt a command. So that at the leaſt, if they will not bring their Children into the Congregation (ſuppoſing they have health to bear it) we ought to refuſe the Regiſtring of them.

The

The Lords Supper.

THE next Conference was upon the Lords Supper, in the obſervation of which, you are directed by 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, and 28 Canons, as likewiſe by the Rubricks in the Office. All which we did unanimouſly agree, not only intirely to obey, ſo far as concerns our ſelves, but likewiſe to promote in others where we are injoyned, as having ſworn to obſerve all ſuch Injunctions. But we found our misfortune here, not ſo much to lye in unworthy or irreverent Communi-

cants,

cants, as that there is a general Apoſtacy (if I may ſo call it) from this ſacred Inſtitution. Our great work therefore in this particular, was, and ſtill is like to be, to perſwade men of the great benefit and neceſſity of this Sacrament ; and from thence to excuſe our ſelves, while we leave no means unattempted to bring them to this Communion.

Nothing certainly can be more poſitive than the Inſtitution ſet down in three of the Goſpels, nor the benefit and great advantage more clearly expreſt than 1. Cor. x, xi. Chapters ; where you have in the xi Chap. v. 26. a plain declaration of the continuance of it

to the end of the World, from this expreſſion, *Ye do ſhew the Lords death till he come.*

It is evident to any that ſhall impartially read the fore-mentioned places of Scripture, that none can pretend to Goſpel-Obedience that omit this Ordinance. And it does as evidently appear, that there is a ſhameful neglect of it throughout this whole Kingdom.

The reaſon of which is plain to any that will look back to the late times, and obſerve how induſtriouſly by an univerſal diſcouragement, either through a ſuperſtitious terror, or prophane contempt, the omiſſion of it was promoted. And this was natural under an uſurp'd Power,

Power, where ſin was the Law, and Tranſgreſſion the beſt Obedience: But now that theſe hardſhips are blown over, where ſhall we find the Bond of Peace, and the Unity of the Spirit, without Communion? What ſecurity have we of being *one Body*, if we are not *one Bread*? 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. How know we that there are not more *Papiſts* amongſt us than *Proteſtants*, and more that offer up *ſtrange Fire*, and partake of *other Altars* than *Ours*, if they eat not of the Sacrifice? *ver.* 18. Surely, if we condemn the Church of *Rome* for putting off half the Communion, they will riſe up in judgment againſt us at the laſt day, and utterly

condemn all ſuch as neglect the whole.

Since then the ſecurity, not only of every private perſon, but even of the whole Church, depends upon the due Obſervation of this Sacrament; it may eaſily be concluded what diligence we ought to uſe to bring the people to a juſt ſenſe of this duty, by Exhortation, Reproof, private Communication from houſe to houſe, eſpecially at ſuch times as we appoint Communions, and whatever elſe Law or Prudence can ſuggeſt to us.

Catechiſm.

THE laſt thing we met upon was Catechiſing, the want of which has left the Church without a foundation; for as the wiſe man ſays, *If early proviſion of good principles be not laid up in the youth, wherewithal ſhall a man have to ſupport himſelf in his riper years?* Eccleſ. xii. 1. I am ſure the Church has order'd the care, in this particular, with great exactneſs, as may be ſeen in the Rubricks of the ſhort Catechiſm, and in the 59th Canon, beſides the ſeveral publick admonitions, whereby its execu-

tion has been recommended to us. What reverence or reſpect can be lookt for from the people to the two Sacraments, when they have never learnt what they are? What Obedience or other Morality to be expected, when they have never underſtood the Commandments? What Faith ſhall we think to find upon the Earth, when the firſt Principles of its Articles have been never laid?

And therefore, if Parents will not anſwer at the laſt day for the ruin of their Children; if Maſters and Miſtreſſes will not take upon them the miſcarriages of their Servants and Apprentices; if we do not intend to be found guilty of the

ſins of the growing Generation in our reſpective Flocks: We ought certainly to uſe all diligence and Authority to bring ſuch as have need of it to receive due inſtruction at the appointed times, or oftner if we find it needful; that at leaſt, whoever miſcarries, we may ſave our own Souls.

I hope I have preſt this duty ſo often, and earneſtly, to my Brethren of the Clergy, that I ſhall never find cauſe to complain of their neglect: which, ſhould I find my ſelf diſappointed in, I could not but reſent it with great grief. But in full aſſurance of your complying, I ſhall only recommend one method to you, that what part

of the Catechiſm you expound one day, you would make thoſe you Catechiſe, give you an account, the next day, of its meaning: That ſo you may be aſſured of the underſtanding and improvement each perſon receives from that Inſtruction.

All this, and whatever elſe, in your own diſcretion, you ſhall find neceſſary for the promoting of what has been ſaid, I do beſeech you, from my ſelf, and conjure you, by the Obedience you owe the Church you are eſtabliſht in, that you omit no care nor diligence for the effecting of it. For this you may be confident of, that I ſhall never enjoyn you any

other thing, than what you have already ſubmitted to, and are bound to obſerve. Our Canons and Conſtitutions are the common voice of the Church; the words of which only, are they that can direct us to an obedience of 1 *Cor.* 1 Chap. *ver.* 10. *That we all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among us, but* that we *be perfectly joyn'd together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment.* Otherwiſe, without ſome common direction and mark to ſteer ourſelves by, it were impoſible to avoid the ſame confuſion as they are ſubject to, that are diſordered by uncertain ſounds, 1 *Cor.* xiv. That God would direct

direct you and your Flock in theſe and all things elſe, is the moſt hearty Prayer of,

SIR,

April 25. 1679. *Your affectionate Friend and Brother,*

H. London.

His

The Lord Bishop of *London's* Second Letter.

I. *The half Communion.*

Good Brother,

A More hardy thing certainly was never undertaken by men, than directly in the face of an Institution of *Christ's* own appointment, to enjoyn the contrary practice, Christ hath said, *Drink ye all of this:* But says the Papist in the Council of *Constance*, *Sess.* 13. Christ *indeed instituted the Communion under both kinds, but to avoid the dangers, and probable scandals that may happen, we do forbid the Administration of the Cup at all to the Laity, and generally*

nerally to any, but to him that Officiates. It would be conſidered, whether the poſitive command of *Chriſt*, or that of the *Council* is to be obey'd, as it is attended with the reaſons of inconvenience? I do preſume a poſitive command of God cannot be diſobey'd without guilt, unleſs ſome one or more of theſe Grounds: Either, 1. That God diſpenſes with it, as he did with Circumciſion in the Wilderneſs. Or, 2. That ſome evil greater than the conſequence of the non-performance of it will certainly follow; as when *David* ate the *Shew-bread*, and they that were with him; which depends upon that Rule of our Saviour, which, though

apply'd

apply'd to the Sabbath, yet extends to all other poſitive commands, that man was not made for them, but they for man: Or laſtly, in caſe of incapacity, as the Children of *Iſraels* not going up to *Jeruſalem* in the time of captivity. And I beſeech you, what has the inconveniency alledg'd by Papiſts to do with any of theſe Reſervations? For they do not pretend to a ſimple Diſpenſation, which can proceed from God only, whoſe Inſtitution it is. Nor to an incapacity. Then for the inconvenience alledg'd, *the ſpilling the Wine, &c.* It is not attended with one juſt circumſtance. It ſhould be certain, whereas it is only proba-

ble; it ſhould be of equal weight to the diſobedience, and is not; nay, without queſtioning the wiſdom of God, it cannot be, becauſe it ſhould be ſomething that falls out extraordinarily, whereas this was a perpetual Objection from the firſt Inſtitution: So that you muſt either ſay, *Chriſt* was not aware of this inconvenience, which had the ſame aſpect upon this part of the Sacrament then, as it has now, and naturally muſt have whilſt the World endures; or elſe he did not think it of conſequence to hinder the receiving the Wine as well as the Bread. As for thoſe frivolous pretences of the uſage ſometimes, to Adminiſter in

one

one kind to Children or to the Sick, or the carrying home of the Conſecrated Bread. To the firſt, it is very improbable that ever it was ſo done; or if it was, the Authority is ſo ſlender, as is not worth conſideration: To the ſecond, whatever ſuperſtitious uſage there was of carrying home the Bread, it is plain none received at the hands of the Miniſter, but under both kinds. To omit the conſtant Authority of the Fathers in this caſe, I will only ſet down what Pope *Gelaſius de Conſecr. diſt.* 2. *cap comperimus*, commands thoſe who through ſome ſuperſtition abſtained from the Cup, that they ſhould either receive the Sacrament compleat and entire,

or be entirely rejected: that the ſeparating one and the ſame Myſtery, could not be done without groſs Sacriledg. And now I conclude with *Caſſander, Conſult. art. 22. de adminiſtratione S. Sancti Sacramenti Euchariſtiæ:* It is evident the Univerſal Church to this very day, the Weſtern for above a Thouſand years after *Chriſt*, did adminiſter the Wine as well as Bread to all the Members of *Chriſt*'s Church; which is manifeſt from a Cloud of Witneſſes, ancient *Greek* and *Latine* Authors, who founded themſelves upon the Inſtitution and Example of our Lord.

II. *Prayers in an unknown Tongue.*

IF Scripture or Reaſon might prevail, this practice could never have paſſed among the Sons of men: but whilſt intereſt and other Indirect ends are the ſcope of too many that profeſs Religion, it is no wonder if darkneſs be upheld for light. The Holy Ghoſt ſays expreſly, 1*Cor.* 14. That the Church ſhould not allow Praying in an *unknown Tongue*, unleſs ſomebody be by to Interpret; becauſe, otherwiſe the unlearned could not ſay, *Amen*. Whereby it appears that the Intention, as well as

Pronunciation of the ſupplicant is required. And indeed, how can it be imagin'd otherwiſe, that God ſhould expect leſs then the offering up to him what he has given us, not to talk like *Parots*, but with our underſtanding a reaſonable Sacrifice; And how can that be, when the beſt pretence Papiſts have, is, that the People have a general notice of what it is they Pray for. If they are capable of a particular, does not the Church of *Rome* make them come ſhort in their duty to God, in hindring them from a compleat performance? For certainly no general notion can make that Impreſſion, as a diſtinct underſtanding of every

term of expreſſion would do. Therefore ſays *Amalarius*, the unlearned hearing what he underſtands not, knows not what he Prays for, and therefore anſwers not *Amen: De divin. offic. l.* 3. *c.* 9. So all the Fathers that have treated of this matter.

III. *Prayers to Saints.*

IT muſt be acknowledg'd, that whoever holds Communion with the Church of *Rome*, muſt Pray to Saints after the ſame external manner, as he Prays to God, that is, he *kneels down*, and worſhips in Gods houſe in the ſolemn time

of

of Gods Service by a Form ſet down in the Liturgy. He bowes before the Saints Image in the Houſe of God, and offers up Incenſe. In ſhort, there is no outward part of Divine Worſhip omitted. Now, I would fain know how it is poſſible to avoid the juſt imputation of Idolatry, when the firſt and ſecond Commandment are ſo many ways intrenched upon? Here is *another Object* beſides God *fallen down before*, and *worſhipped* in the Houſe of God, joyned with the Service of God. And what if there be a difference of Addreſs in the expreſſion and degree of Devotion, can that take off the ſcandal given to the greateſt part of the

world,

world, who judge by the eye, and cannot judge otherwiſe? Does that anſwer that Chaſtity of Worſhip, which God has ſo ſuitably to our underſtandings expreſſed himſelf to expect from us: *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God?* But (alas!) when we conſider the ſuperſtitious nature of mankind, how apt to run after other Gods, how unable to reſiſt the ſtronger impreſſion of the more ſenſible Object, be the other never ſo conſiderable; nay, that we ſee the common People in *Popiſh Countries* run ſo faſt into the ſenſible Devotion of their Fellow-Creatures, that they have let go their hold on *Chriſt* the Head. *Coloſſ. cap.* 2. and

have forgot God; their Guardian Angels and Protecting Saints fill their Hearts and Souls, and through will-Worship and affected Humility, God is hardly in all their thoughts: how ought we to fly from such Temptation, as from the Plague, and declare with S. *Austin*, that we honour the Saints in Love, and not in Worship! *Hæres.* 39. *de vera Rel.*

And thus I have given you a brief hint, of what I hope shortly you will with the former Conferences have in full measure, and what I must needs confess was by many of you carefully and accurately discussed. You cannot in so narrow

a compaſs expect more than the ſtate of a Queſtion, which will however (I hope) anſwer my purpoſe to mind you of your own conceptions, and what in the Conferences you heard from others, and to admoniſh you of your duty from the above-recited Canons.

SIR,

Fulham,
July 6.
1680.

Your affectionate Friend,
and Brother,

H. London.

His

The Biſhop OF LONDON HIS *Third Letter.*

Good Brother,

THoſe two Conferences we held the laſt year, were upon Subjects ſo uſeful in their kind, that I cannot forbear repeating to you the Subſtance of what was then Diſcourſed. Not that

I queſtion your conſtant Heed of theſe things; but that I may not be wanting on my part, to mind and remind you of ſo important Conſiderations.

Confirmation.

IT is acknowledged by the moſt conſiderable Authors of the Reformation, as well as others, *That the laying on of hands*, Heb. 6. 2. does refer to the Rite of Confirmation. Some Practice like this was uſed amongſt the Jews, when they admitted Adults into their Syna-

Synagogues: to which that paſſage in the Goſpel ſeems to relate, *Luke* 18. 15. where the Diſciples would have hindred the little Children from being brought to Chriſt. For it is not improbable, that they had in their Eye the Confirmatory Uſage in the Synagogues, to which none were admitted, before they were of age to undertake for themſelves. Our Saviour, when he ſaith, *Thus it becometh to fulfil all righteouſneſs*, Matth. 3. 15. comprehended no doubt the whole Ceremony, that was then to be paſſed upon him, in which ſeems to be contain'd,

1. Baptiſm. *Then he ſuffered him.*

2. Confirmation. *When he was baptized, he went up ſtraightway out of the water; and lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a Dove, and lighting upon him.* Pſ. 16.

3. His Miſſion or Conſecration to his Office: *And lo, a voice from Heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* Thus hath *Optatus* againſt the Donatiſts, and *Cyril, Catech.* 3. interpreted this Paſſage. However, that Chriſt did not immediately, or in perſon conſtitute this Rite, we muſt acknowledge. But on the other ſide, that it was eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles in the Authority of the

the Spirit of Christ, will as evidently appear. So that, as we ought not to give it the Title of a Sacrament, neither ought we to pay only an ordinary regard to it, since it is ordained by him whom Christ has sent. The extraordinary Signs that were given at the first practice of it by the Apostles, have made some imagine, that it was but a temporary Usage, during the power of Miracles; and that no more was effected thereby than the outward and visible Tokens of the Holy Ghost, coming upon them by the Gift of Tongues, Prophecy, or some other Sign or Appearance. But how weak this conceit is,

will be ſeen from two or three Obſervations.

1. In that very place, *Acts* 8. where this power is mentioned: There is no exception of Age, Sex, or Profeſſion; but all indifferently that had been baptized, received the Holy Ghoſt by Impoſition of Hands. So it is ſaid, *Act.* 10. 47. when S. *Peter* Preached at *Cornelius*'s Houſe, the Holy Ghoſt fell upon all that were to be baptized, as a Token of their being fit for it: *Verſe* 48.

If the Caſe be thus, that the Holy Ghoſt fell on all indifferently, and that all could not propheſie, all had not the Gift of Healing, or of Tongues, nay, that all had not

not a ſhare of any outward Gift: then certainly they, whom God ſeparated not to any Office of the Church by ſome outward Gift for the Converſion or Edification of others, had only ſome outward ſhew paſſed upon them, for the greater evidence of the inward Gifts of the Spirit of Grace, *Gratiæ gratum faciextis.*

2. That Paſſage, *Heb.* 6. 2. places *Laying on of hands* amongſt the firſt Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and as part of the Foundation-Work common to all that come into the Church, as appears from *Verſe* 1. Therefore ſurely it imports more than a *temporary* external Act, and

and may at leaſt, in ſome meaſure have relation to theſe Words, *Ye were ſealed by that Holy Spirit of Promiſe*, Eph. 1. 13.

3. The univerſal and conſtant acknowledgment, and practice of the Churches of God in all Ages, as a conſequent Rite after the Sacrament of Baptiſm muſt needs put it beyond diſpute with men of tolerable modeſty. *Tertul. de Præſcript. adverſus Her. cap.* 36. is very expreſs in the benefit, as well as uſage of it. *Cyril, Optatus, Aug. Irenæus, Euſebius, Theodoret*, and many others, put it beyond diſpute. What if S. *Herome* ſays it was in *honorem Sacerdotii*? He does not ſay,

ſay that, as the whole end of the Inſtitution, but why it was appropriated to the Biſhop.

That *Myron* or *Chriſma* was uſed early in the Church muſt be acknowledged: but it is as true that ſhe never uſed it otherwiſe than a bare Ceremony, whatever the modern conceits of *Rome* in proſecution of her ſuperſtitious methods have arrogated to the uſage of it.

As the conſtant and due obſervation of this Rite has been ever carefully purſued under the beſt times; and as for many other reaſons, ſo particularly to avoid the almoſt impracticableneſs of it, repetition in this Point has

ever

ever been forbidden; ſo has our Church, amongſt other good Proviſions, out of its great and wiſe care, ſo ordered the execution of it, that without great inadvertency and careleſneſs it can neither be omitted, repeated, nor miſs of the beſt ends it could be improv'd to. And this you may eaſily perceive from the Directions given to the ſeveral Perſons concerned in it. As

1. To the Biſhop, who is obliged by the ſixtieth Canon to make it one of his ſpecial cares to confirm all that ſhall be diſpoſed for it.

2. Every Miniſter within his Cure, is ſo to prepare the Youth by Catechizing and

other

other good Inſtructions, as that they may be able duly to preſent them to the Biſhop, whenever he calls upon them. And for your better Direction, pray conſider well the laſt words that you ſay at the end of the Office of publick Baptiſm; but eſpecially the third and fourth Rubrick at the end of the ſhort Catechiſm, and *Can.* 61.

3. As it is the ſolemn admittance of all men into the Communion of our Church, by their then taking upon themſelves their Baptiſmal Vow; ſo it is ordained that none ſhall be admitted to the Holy Communion until he be confirmed, or be ready

and

and desirous to be confirmed. As you have it in the Rubrick at the end of Confirmation. And for that purpose, in the Rubrick of Baptism for those of riper years, such are admonished to take the first convenience of being confirm'd, that so they may be admitted to the Holy Communion.

Visitation

Viſitation of the Sick.

THis is an Office that certainly carries in it not only the moſt grateful performances to the nature of mankind, but the moſt ſuitable to the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and him that Preached it. All the higheſt Acts of Compaſſion are contained in it. For if we take it in its juſt Latitude, it has regard to the ſick in mind, as well as body, to thoſe that are deſtitute, or diſtreſſed any way.

In the profecution of this duty, we ought to take our Bleſſed Saviour's Example, who did not ſtay till he was called, neither remained in Heave ntill the World ſhould become worthy to receive him, but came unſought for, and unwelcome, to a World that preferred Darkneſs before Light; that hated him, whilſt by the utmoſt practices of its malice upon him, he brought Salvation to it. Therefore nothing leſs than an abſolute impoſſibility ſhould diſcourage us from performing this Duty.

It is true, The viſiting of the ſick ſeems to be injoyned as a Chriſtian Duty upon all that will obey the truth; but

if all are obliged to it, as no doubt they are, it does not hinder, that there may not lie a greater obligation upon ſome, than others. They to whom eſpecially the Cure of a particular number of Souls is committed, are doubtleſs under a higher obligation to take care of thoſe Souls, than the reſt of Chriſtians; and they that are ſent, and have thereby a power of adminiſtring the greateſt comfort, are more nearly concerned, than others; beſides that our Calling and the Diſpenſations that belong to it, are for the good of Chriſt's Body, which is the Church.

But to take this Subject in the narroweſt ſenſe, in re-

ſpect of thoſe that are ſick: can there be a greater Charity than to help our Neighbour, when he is not able to help himſelf? Can there be a more preſſing occaſion, than at a time that may prove the laſt opportunity of our Brother's receiving any good at our hands? Can there be a time more hopeful to bring men to a juſt ſenſe of their duty, and the folly of their ſins; than when all paſſions are quieted, and the hopes of enjoyment mortified? Can any thing get us a better name and eſteem amongſt men, and by conſequence gain a greater intereſt and power to do good upon them, than to endeavour to help

help thoſe, that are leaſt able to help themſelves, and extend our care and charitable attendance to the laſt breath?

The ſixty ſeventh Canon gives a full direction how to behave our ſelves in this point, and the Office contains as much as the nature of the thing would allow of. For there are ſo many various caſes may happen from the different operations of Diſeaſes, and diſquietneſs of mind, that it were impoſſible to provide for all accidents. Therefore the Canon allows the uſe of diſcretion, where the caſe requires it. That which conſtantly will need our conſideration, is the diſ-

penſing the ſeveral parts of this Office. For ſometimes Prayers are only required, ſometimes the Communion, ſometimes Abſolution. Now for the diſcouraging of the ſick perſon, if it ſhould pleaſe God to reſtore him to his health again, and for a warning to others, the two laſt ſhould not be adminiſtred without ſtrong tokens of Repentance, if he has been a careleſs liver, and ſome earneſt importunities on the ſick man's ſide, and a reluctancy and difficulty on ours.

But you will ſay, If a Perſon be Excommunicated, how ſhall I diſcharge this duty to him, ſo far as to

make

make him capable of Chriſtian Burial? The ſixty eighth Canon plainly directs you in all but one caſe, when it ſays, Chriſtian Burial ſhall not be refuſed, *except the party deceaſed were denounced excommunicated majori excommunicatione, for ſome grievous and notorious Crime.* No doubt then ſpiritual comfort cannot be refuſed to ſuch as Chriſtian Burial is allowed. But even in this caſe of the greateſt Excommunion, I make no queſtion, but at the hour of Death, if the perſon ſeem heartily to deſire reconciliation, and to be ſinking under the burden of deſpair, Abſolution may be adminiſtred to him: which

which will have its effect *in foro interno*, according to God's acceptance, and his own ſincerity: tho the ſentence *fori externi* be not thereby releaſed. *For the Son of man is come to ſave that which was loſt*, Mat. 18. 11.

This I think is moſt of what was diſcourſed: and a diligent practice of it, with our other Duties, is, that we muſt reconcile us to God and Man, and give us temporal, as well as eternal peace. I have, I bleſs God, no reaſon in the general to miſtruſt your care. And therefore with my hearty prayer, that the Holy Spirit may ever reſt upon

upon you, and work more and more in you, for the edification and increaſe of Chriſt's Flock: I remain,

Your Affectionate
Friend and Brother,
H. *LONDON.*

Fulham,
1682.

The Biſhop of London's Fourth Letter.

Good Brother,

I Do acknowledge that I am bound to lay my ſelf out in any thing that may conduce to your Aſſiſtance, for carrying on that Great Work, which lyes upon you, of the cure of Souls.

Souls. But when I reflect upon the cheerful concurrence I met with in those endeavours I have hitherto used for the promoting that Unanimity, which is the Life and Strength of your performance, and Cements and Embodies your whole proceeding to a lasting strength: I cannot, but with a most thankful Heart to God, rejoyce in that just disposition, with which, by his Grace, he has fill'd your honest Mind. That therefore I may never be wanting, and that this Repetition of what you were my Councellour in the last year, may the more quicken you to do your duty in those things, which you did

did then ſo readily conſent and adviſe to: Take your own and my ſenſe, ſo near as I can recollect it, concerning the Subject of our laſt conference.

Upon Canon 54.

THe Title and Subſtance of this Canon is, *The Licenſes of Preachers refuſing Conformity, to be void.* And to compleat the expectation of the Church in matters of this nature: We muſt look to Canon 38. which ordains, That *Obſtinate Revolters after Subſcription, are to be depos'd from the Miniſtry.* The rea-

reaſon of theſe Severities, proceeds from the abſolute neceſſity of keeping up Diſcipline in the Church of God. For Nature, the Conſtitution of the World, Experience in the ſubſiſtence and ſucceſs of things, teach us, that the Maker of all things is a God of Order, and hates Confuſion. Therefore is the Church of Chriſt likened to a Building, which conſiſts in an orderly diſpoſing of different Materials into one Structure. *I will Build my Church*, ſays our Saviour, Mat. 16.18. *You alſo are Built together*, &c. Eph. 2. 2. St. *Paul* writing to the Schiſmatical Separatiſts of *Corinth*, *As a wiſe Maſter Builder, I have laid the*

Foun-

Foundation, 1 Cor. 3. 10. *Ye are Gods Building*, 1 Cor. 3. 9. *In whom all the Building fitly fram'd*, Eph. 2. 21. And ſo in many other places. It is alſo expreſs'd as a Body; See 1 *Cor.* 12. how the Apoſtle adapts the Conſtitution and Frame of the Natural Body, to that of the Church, and concludes, *verſ.* 27. *Ye are the Body of Chriſt.* — *For the edifying the Body of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 4. 12. *and* verſ. 16. *The whole Body fitly joyn'd, together*, &c. *maketh increaſe of the Body. From which the Body by Joynts and Bands*, Col. 2. 19. *For his Body's ſake, which is the Church*, Col. 1. 24. There are many more expreſſions of this kind; but

I mention theſe eſpecially, to ſhew after what manner we are Embody'd, and to what end. Sometimes it is called a Kingdom, which is a Body Politick, under one Head: *The Goſpel of the Kingdom*, Mat. 4. 23. *I appoint you a Kingdom*, Luke 22. 29. And ſo in divers other Portions of Scripture. But to let us underſtand how neceſſarily the utmoſt Rigour of Diſcipline is to be obſerv'd in a Chriſtian, we are moſt truly repreſented to be in a ſtate of War, continually encountring the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, at the Peril of an Everlaſting Death: And therefore he ſays, *Put on the Armour of Light*, Rom. 13. 12.

13. 12. *Put on the whole Armour of God*, Eph. 6. 11. Now we know under what ſevere Penalties almoſt the leaſt fault is forbid by Martial Law, and how ſtrictly it is Executed, not from the roughneſs of the Profeſſion, but the Nicety of the Caſe; where every little diſorder, or diſobedience to command, always gives advantage to a watchful Enemy, and many times endangers a total overthrow. We are therefore to conſider what is expected from us, for the fitting our ſelves to this poſture, that we may be able to ſtand in the day of tryal.

1. The firſt thing we are to do, is ſo well to diſpoſe

our ſelves, by an humble and peaceable Mind, that in the Church where it has pleas'd God to place us, *In what ſtate ſoever, therewith to be content: To ſtudy to be quiet and mind our own buſineſs:* And to yield a hearty, willing and thorow Conformity to the Rules we are under. For if nothing be ordain'd contrary to the expreſs Will of God: *Every Ordinance of Man is to be ſubmitted to for the Lords ſake,* 1 Pet. 2. 13. To this end, the two Acts of Uniformity ought to be ſtrictly read, and Obſerved by us. As alſo the Conſtitutions and Canons Eccleſiaſtical, *Anno* 1603. with the Rubricks to the ſeveral

veral Offices in the Liturgy; taking great heed at the ſame time to our Doctrin, by having a ſpecial regard to the 39 Articles, as expounded in the Books of Homilies. That neither in word nor deed we may hurt, or offend the Church we ſerve in.

What leſs can we think our ſelves obliged to; when we conſider in what manner St. *Paul* conjures the *Corinthians*? Ch 1. 10. *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions (or Schiſms) among you. But that you be perfectly joyn'd together in the ſame mind, and and in the ſame Judgment.*

And, *let us walk by the ſame Rule, let us mind the ſame thing*, Phil. 3. 16. *Let all things be done decently and in order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40. Surely after this we may ſafely conclude, that whoſoever tranſgreſſes the Rule upon a leſs account, then obedience to the expreſs Will of God, or *ſhall teach men ſo; he ſhall be call'd the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

We are not here to underſtand every breach of the Rule, to lye under this guilt, but ſuch as are committed wilfully, or out of ſupine negligence. Neither need we think it a neglect of Duty in thoſe things, which by an Univerſal omiſſion, the

ſilence

ſilence of our Superiours giving way to it, lye under a tacite conſent of Abrogation, or Suſpenſion at leaſt. Nor are we to think it a ſmall matter, the leaving theſe things undone; becauſe it is of greater immediate duty to obſerve the weightier matters of the Law. I ſay immediate, inaſmuch as the conſequence in the omiſſion of leſſer matters, may occaſionally and too freequently does prove more fatal to the peace of the Church, and Mens Conſciences, than the other.

2. In the next place, we are to conſider our ſelves in the State of Church Diſcipline, as Watchmen and Shepherds

Shepherds to guard and ſecure our Flocks. We muſt for this Reaſon, not only ſee that we our ſelves, but be carefull that others do not offend thoſe that in a ſpecial manner belong to us. We muſt drive away all erroneous Doctrines, and avoid diſorderly Walkers. We muſt drive away the bold Wolves, the little Foxes, and all Beaſts of Prey, as we will otherwiſe anſwer for the care committed unto us.

If any come upon us, or go out from among us, and diſcover the Savageneſs of their natures, by not being content to forſake and renounce Order themſelves,

but

but teach and encourage men ſo to do; theſe are Beaſts of Prey. And it is one of the great advantages God has beſtowed upon us, in that promiſe to his Church, *Iſa.* 49, 23. *Kings ſhall be thy nurſing Fathers, and Queens thy nurſing Mothers.* That all offenſive and diſorderly Walkers may by their Protection and coercive Power, either be reduc'd, or ſecur'd from harming of us. For there is no pretence of Perſecution in this, no more than if a Man ſhould ſo call a juſt Conviction for an Action of Battery: *Becauſe he is Self-condemned*, Tit. 3. 11. and is not puniſhed for his Opinion, but for his

his disorderly acting upon that Opinion. Such was *Diotrephes, who loved to have the prebeminence*, 3 Joh. 9, 10. And if you should pass over the *Deeds which such Men do*; you would be the Betrayers and Murderers of your Flocks. Like *the Hireling, who fleeth*, or sitteth still, *when he sees the Wolf coming*, Joh. 10. 13.

There is another sort of disorderly Walkers who still keep amongst us, of whom I may say in the Apostles Words, *I have told you before, and now tell you even Weeping*, that by a base compliance and a servile Aw of the most Blameworthy of their Flock, they discover so cowardly a

 temper,

temper, and unſutable to that Chriſtian courage, which ſhould place them above the fear of Men; that they become *the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt*. Such Men ſhould not be ſuffered to herd with us, but ought to be avoided as infectious Creatures. *Mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye learnt, and avoid them*, Rom. 16. 17. Such Wretches lye under a complication of diſeaſes; being diſobedient, through omiſſion of their Duty; Traitors, in not Faithfully diſcharging the truſt committed to them; diſorderly, in not Walking according

cording to the Rule; perjur'd, in breaking their Oath of Canonical obedience, and that of Supremacy; injurious to their Brethren and the whole Church, by cheriſhing the unruly expectations of the People; and are ſo many ways Unfaithful, that had they any ſence of Religion, the conſequent words of St. *Paul* muſt needs make them aſham'd, and confounded. *For they that are ſuch, ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly.* 18. Or as it is in another place, *Whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly, and whoſe Glory is in their ſhame, who mind Earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19

In ſhort, do but mark the careful admonition againſt all ἀταξία or diſorder in the Church. *Warn them that are unruly*, 1 Theſ. 5. 14. *Now we command you Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw you ſelves from every Brother that walks diſorderly*, 2 Theſ. 3. 6. And then obſerve with what pleaſure that εὐταξία or good order is mentioned: For *I though abſent in the Fleſh, yet am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding* τάξιν ὑμῶν, *your order*, Col. 2. 5. This word ſhould be written in the Forehead as well as Heart of every Chriſtian, but eſpecially of the Clergy, as *Pilate*'s Inſcription upon the Croſs, in

Hebrew, Greek and Latine, that from East to West, and throughout the World, the Glory of our *Christian* consent might be understood.

You may remember upon the recommending a Hearty & Serious pronunciation of the Divine Service, it was thought very adviseable and reasonable to forbear long and expatiating Prayers before Sermon:. Lest either we should be thought our selves to esteem the Publick Offices deficient, or give Occasion to others to be of that Opinion. Upon which Occasion was mention'd Mr. *Seymours little Treatise of Publick set Forms of Prayer.* Then likewise

likewiſe were recommended for your People to read, Mr: *Alden's* little Books, *viz. A Perſuaſive to Peace and Unity. A Serious and Friendly Addreſs to the Nonconformiſts. The danger of Enthuſiaſm.* And I ſhall now add his Book call'd *Catholiciſm.* As alſo Mr. *Lamb's* two Books, *viz. A ſtop to the Courſe of Separation: And a freſh ſuit againſt Independency.* And this I did, not only for their brevity, but becauſe they are written by Laymen. And ſuch whoſe expreſſions are ſo fair, and their integrity and manner of living ſo well known in in the *City*: That it were impoſſible to propoſe more unexceptionable, either as to the

Style or Authors. I then wiſhed you, as I ſtill do, to Read the Canons to your Congregation once a year, as it is ordered in the Kings Confirmation of them: And that ſuch Acts or Proclamations as have been appointed to be Read upon the thirtyeth of *January*, the nine and twentieth of *May*, and fifth of *November*, might be for the future obſerved.

The urging neceſſity of Perſecution forceth Men into order. But in times of Proſperity, there is great danger of falling aſleep: Eſpecially in ours, where the corruption of the Age makes unrulineſs paſs for a virtue. And yet the Cenſorious humour which it produces, is a ſtrong

ſtrong motive on the other hand, where any ſparks of Wiſdom or common prudence remain, to obſerve a very ſtrict and cloſe Order in our own Defence. Take away then the Glory of ordaining Rules, by that which is of infinitely more value, the obſervation of them. And let not the great and painful care of the Fathers of the Primitive *Church*, both by Private endeavors, and in *Councels*, riſe up in Judgment againſt us, for deſtroying that Diſcipline by diſorder and neglect, which at the peril of their Lives many times, they upheld for the preſervation of *Chriſts* Body, which is the *Church*. I pray God ſtrengthen your

Heart with a courage ſuitable for the times we live in, and every way enable you to anſwer the juſt expectations of,

Your Affectionate

Friend and Brother,

H. London.

Fulham, April 6. 1683.

THE

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON'S FIFTH LETTER TO THE Clergy of his Dioceſs. 1684.

Good Brother,

THE Care and Diligence which the perverſeneſs of this World does exact of us

to keep the Flock of Chriſt in any tolerable good order, is ſo inceſſant, as well as great; That all occaſions of incitement to our Duty, are but too little for the mightineſs of the Work. Yet ſtill there is a bleſſing goes along with honeſt endeavours, and God will not require more of us than what we can do, by the meaſure of that grace and ſueceſs he gives us. That part of your Duty which I ſhall now inſiſt upon, is,

Canon CXVIII.

I did not pitch upon this Canon, for the Subject of our laſt conference, with an intent to preſs the whole Obſervation of it,

it, otherwiſe than to introduce the conſideration of that Preſentment in particular, which relates to the Holy Communion.

As an entire obedience to the Conſtitutions of any Government is abſolutely neceſſary, both upon account of the ſucceſs, which the mutual aſſiſtance one Law affords another, can only carry on, and the honour and reputation of them and their Maker. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that ſaid*, &c. *Jam.* 2. 10, 11. ſo is a Coercive Diſcipline to bend our ſtubborn humours to that compliance which is requiſite. But that which will moſt contribute to the juſtifying of what

what I am now to preſs, will be an impartial preſentment of all ſorts of Recuſants, and all Prophane and Debauched Perſons, that the excuſing of one kind of ſin, may not raiſe a clamorous pretence for paſſing by another. And you would do well to obſerve that the Miniſter is by this Canon enjoyned to preſent as well as his Church-Wardens, &c.

A meaſure more for the Honour and Service of the Goſpel, and more ſuitable to the great wiſdom of a Nurſing Father could not have been taken, than aſſerting the obſervation of this Bleſſed Sacrament, wherein the whole Myſtery and Benefit of the New Covenant is contained.

contained. There may be, and are certainly, many other particulars, the obſervation of which, if they were more ſtrictly enjoyned, would conduce much to Peace and Conformity in the Church, and will no doubt in time be thought on. But what could be more ſuitable to the Majeſty of a Prince to begin with, than that in which the Majeſty of Gods wonderful diſpenſation of the Goſpel is ſeated?

You are not to wonder when you meet with a loud outcry upon the legal preſſing of this duty, if you do but look back to the late times, and conſider what a diſmal confuſion and waſt the Conſciences of

of Men were then left in, for want of having been inſtructed in the plain and true Principles of Chriſtian Religion, being Deceived and Deluded, by Canting and Obſcure Notions, which left them ſo bewildred, that every true Call, is to them a Voice out of the Clouds and like the Children of Iſrael, *They deſire to hear it no more.* For it is a beloved Wilderneſs, where the Doctrine of cenſuring others, and obſerving no order themſelves is the whole Catechiſm. But you are to conſider what is good and neceſſary, not what is pleaſing, tho the more you love, the leſs you are beloved. He muſt be a very indifferent Chriſtian, that can think it reaſonable

ſonable to let People thus ſettle upon the fowleſt Lees. If a Heathen, a Jew, or a Mahomatan live amongſt us, we muſt firſt perſwade him to enter into Covenant, before we require him to obey the Laws of it: But when a Man will declare himſelf a Chriſtian, and yet violate the moſt Sacred Inſtitutions of it, he is *ſelf condemned*, becauſe he has put himſelf under the power of that to which he will not conform. Patience and forbearance, intreaty and gentleneſs ought to be uſed, and when that will not do, ſeverer applications are to be made, eſpecially in ſo eſſential a point, by which the Lord himſelf was made known to his

Diſciples, *Luke* 24. 35. that if by any means. *The Spirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord.*

If theſe men were not ſtrangers to the conſtant and univerſal practice of Chriſtendom, and ſo miſerably ſeduced out of their ſenſe and reaſon; they would eaſily acknowledge the juſtice of expecting a conformity in this matter, and would be aſhamed any longer ſo fooliſhly to fight the battle of the aliens. Would they but conſult the Ninth Canon of the Apoſtles, but eſpecially the Second of the Councel of *Antioch* they would find, that no Man came to Publick Prayers, but, under pain of being turned out of the Church, was likewiſe to receive

ceive the Sacrament: And whoever had incurred that Penalty, was not to be received again into the Congregation, without doing publick Penance. Let them but look into the Diſcipline of the Reformed Churches, and all others that are, or ever were, and ſee if there be not a Catholick conſent in this particular. What can we ſay then leſs of ſuch unhappy Men, who either for want of true knowledge, or from the inſolence of a private Spirit, will pretend to wear a Wedding Garment, and yet not go to the Feaſt: But as St. *Paul* ſaid of the Jews---*They pleaſe not God, and are contrary to all Men*?

The Care our Church has taken for the Obſervation of this Holy Sacrament, is, Firſt, That you give notice of every Communion in the Congregation the Lord's day before, Can. 22. Secondly, That you admit no Scandalous and Notorious ſinner, leſt the ſolemnity be evil ſpoken of, Can. 26. Thirdly, That no Schiſmaticks and diſorderly walkers be ſuffered to Communicate, leſt the breach of the publick Peace of the Church, which is ſo great a ſin, ſhould be thought none at all, Can. 27. Fourthly and Laſtly, That notice be taken whether all the Pariſh receives, and that none of another Pariſh be allowed to Communicate with you,

you, Can. 28. Which Canon was certainly ordained upon moſt uſeful and weighty reaſons. For you otherwiſe hurt the Diſcipline and good Order of the Church, by invading the right of his proper Miniſter. You know not but that you may admit of Profligate and unruly perſons, and thus take ſpots into your Feaſts, to your own ſhame and the Scandal of others. You may unawares receive Hereticks and Excommunicated Perſons, and ſo grievouſly wound the very Vital Parts of the Churches body Having thus in ſhort laid the rules before you in the diſcharge of your duty towards your Flock: Take what you

do in caſe of refractorineſs from the words of Can. 112. *The Miniſter*, &c. *of every Parochial Church or Chappel ſhall every Year within Forty days after* Eaſter, *give in the Names and Surnames of all of each Sex, within his Pariſh, who being above the age of Sixteen Years, have not come to the Holy Communion that* Eaſter.

After all, there is a Chriſtian temper to be uſed in theſe performances. *Of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference; and others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the fire*, Jud. 22, 23, For tho we cannot ſee into the Hearts of Men, ſo as to diſcern the ſincerity of each Perſon, yet there will be much

diſcovery

diſcovery by outward behaviour, that we may eaſily judge of. If a Man obſtinately aſſert and inſtruct others againſt the rule, if a Man be wilful and froward, if he give ill language, or make uſe of his Nonconformity for a Cloke of Sedition, and the like; ſurely none will ſay, but fear is the beſt argument againſt ſuch. On the other ſide, if a quiet behaviour towards the publick, and in private converſation, appear in any of theſe Men, all gentleneſs is to be uſed, but ſo as neither the one nor other ſort be left unattempted by means and in manner ſuitable.

Such a ſpirit then ought to appear in you, as that nothing

ſeem to be done out of Malice, Revenge or Enmity, but whatever remedy you find needful, or your duty to apply, that you do it not as a tormenter, but as a good Phyſician, who may give bitter Potions and diſagreeable to the Palate for ſaving the Man; who if not ſenſible of his own illneſs, it renders his caſe more deſperate, and may require ſeverer Medicines. The Chirurgion when he Cauteriſes, Lances, or Cuts off a Limb, does it for the good of him he thus uſes: A Furnace of Affliction may be applyed, tho Fire and Fagot be unlawful. Whatever you do, let the ſpirit of love and ſobriety direct you in it; thus

you

you cannot eaſily correct a-miſs. For a Miniſter of the Goſpel ought not to act without fear or wit.

One great work there is ſtill to do in order to make our attempts ſucceſsful, and that is to walk uprightly our ſelves. However the Duty is incumbent upon them, and that the unworthineſs of the Miniſter be no juſt excuſe for their forbearance, yet by the ſubtilty of the Devil, and the deceivableneſs of Luſts, ſuch objections will perſwade Men to abhor the Offerings of the Lord. Therefore as in Religion we cannot expect a bleſſing upon our endeavours, unleſs we pleaſe God, ſo neither in prudence may we hope

hope to proſper, unleſs we bear a Conſcience void of offence towards Man. Pray then Earneſtly for the Aſſiſtance of Gods Holy Spirit, and in your Prayers, I beſeech you, forget not.

Your aſſured Friend and Brother

H. London.

1684.

Good

Good Brother,

YOU ſee with what Difficulty we perſuade Chriſtians to do that, of which in former Ages, and in moſt Churches, except ours, at this Day, it is counted the ſevereſt Penance to be debarr'd. So that either ſome new Goſpel is crept in amongſt us, or elſe we have ſhamefully perverted the Old One. To ſay we deſire to be at Union, and yet refuſe that Bread which Sacramentally makes us ſo; to ſay we expect to partake of the Benefits of Chriſt's Body and Blood, and yet reject the Communion of them; to expect the end, and avoid the means, is ſuch a piece of Contradiction, that we are not to wonder at any

Abſurdity

Abſurdity after this. If it be poſſible then, let us uſe all our Endeavours to recover the People from ſo Fatal a miſtake, and the Reputation of our Church from ſo foul a Reproach. See that your Church-Wardens do their Duties in this particular; which if they be men of Conſcience they cannot refuſe. And I muſt deſire your Hand to the Truth of what they preſent. And I pray read this to your Congregation at Morning and Evening Service; that it may not be pretended, that timely Notice was not given, to prevent an *Eaſter* Preſentment.

Fulham March 19. 1684.

H. London

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON'S SIXTH LETTER TO THE Clergy of his Dioceſs. 1685.

Good Brother,

I Have been the more careful to repeat to you the Subſtance of that Conference we

held the laſt Year; becauſe it will be impoſſible for me this Year to appoint a time of Meeting; tho I have reaſon to hope, I ſhall not wholly be detain'd from you. However, I wiſh your whole two Years intent upon a Reformation in this particular, may be able but in ſome meaſure to recover our decay'd Diſcipline.

Canon XIII.

It is not only ordained in this *Canon* that *Sundays* and other *Holydays* ſhall be obſerved, as they are appointed by the Church; and in the 64th *Canon*, that Parſons and Curates ſhall bid *Holydays* under pain of Cenſure; but from the beginning

beginning of the Reformation it has been enjoyn'd to do the like, as may be ſeen in the Injunctions of *Edward* the *6th.* 1547. and in thoſe of Queen *Eliz.* 1559. as likewiſe the firſt of *Eliz. Sect.* 4, and 5. where the Archbiſhops and Biſhops are in God's Name earneſtly required, *&c.* So that in this caſe there is a Rule for us to walk by; and therefore it was worth our conſideration to examine, Firſt, Why? And Secondly, How we ſhould follow it?

Firſt, The Inducement to this performance, is grounded upon Authority ſufficient to prevail with any meek and quiet Spirit to acquieſce, and to ſtop

the Mouths of thoſe that are otherwiſe: For if there be no harm in the Practice the Authority of the Church under whoſe immediate Diſcipline we live, is a ſufficient ground for our Conformity: But we have the Churches Practice from the beginning. It is true indeed, for the firſt three hundred years it does not appear, that there were more days obſerv'd, than the *Lord's Day*, *Eaſter*, *Aſcenſion*, *Whitſunday* and *Chriſtmas-day*; this laſt ſeeming not of quite ſo ancient Obſervation as the former; tho' we are told by the Emperor *Conſtantine*, in a Letter recorded by *Socrates*, that *Good Friday* was appointed

pointed by the *Lord* himſelf. But this ought to be no Objection againſt the Addition of a few more in after Ages: For when the Church was at eaſe, Chriſtians were more frequently called from their Devotion to the buſineſs of the World; which would certainly ſwallow up the whole Man, were not ſet and appointed times ordain'd for ſerving God, and calling to mind the wonderful things that he has done for us. In times of Perſecution every day was a *Holyday*, and every hour the Example of ſome bleſſed Martyr paſs'd before Mens Eyes; the Memory of which again was refreſh'd when they Aſſembled at the *Martyria*; but

in prosperous days all these things would be forgot, were not the Fundamental Dispensations of our Religion, and the great Examples of the blessed *Apostles* every Year in their turns set before us.

And therefore if Authority were wanting, the reasonableness of the Practice would induce us to it. Not to urge the Morality of the 4*th*. Commandment, can we imagine a more effectual way of Imprinting the Remembrance of the great Mysteries of our Religion in the Minds of Men, and to convince them, that it is in the power of Man, so far to come up to the Merits of them, as the Gospel under the favora-

ble

ble acceptance of God, exacts at our Hands, then by ſetting apart ſolemn times for the Remembrance of thoſe great Mercies the Goſpel has diſpenced to us, and by ſetting forth the power of God's Spirit in the Example of the holy Apoſtles, who were Men of like infirmity with our ſelves: But when we conſider the Benignity of his Wiſdom, which has ſo diſpoſed the courſe of the World, that what in Duty and Gratitude towards our Maker, we are bound to do, falls out to be the indiſpenſible ſupport of Humane Nature: We can never deſpiſe the Obſervation of days, as it is conſiſtent with Chriſtian Liberty:

but

but we muſt at the ſame time, in our Hearts deſpiſe Religion it ſelf: For to allow of a time of Refreſhment for the wearied Limbs of the Labourer, and a Relaxation to the Man of Buſineſs; and not to make uſe of that Occaſion to ſtir up to Spiritual Exerciſe, were to level us with the Beaſts that periſh. *Plato de Legibus Lib.* 2. ſays very well to this purpoſe; *The Gods in pity to the Miſerable State of Humane Nature have appointed* Holy-day *for their own Honor, in which Men may reſt from their Labour.*

The Petrobruſian *Hereſie* flatters it ſelf with two or three Texts of Scripture, that make nothing

nothing to their purpoſe, when duly conſidered, *Coloſſ.* 2. 16. *Let no man judge you in Meat or in Drink, or in reſpect of an* Holyday. It follows, *or of the New-Moon, or of the Sabbaths.* Which plainly ſhews, that it refers to the Weakneſs of the Judaizing Chriſtians. *Gal.* 4. 10, 11. *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years, I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you Labour in vain.* The whole Epiſtle refers to Judaizing. *Rom.* 14. 5. *One Man eſteems one day above another; another eſteemeth every day alike*; That is, one Man is ſuperſtitious upon the Holineſs of a Day; another reckons all alike, and that according to the true Rule of Chriſtian

Chriſtian Liberty ; the day is not in it ſelf ſanctified by a Religious Obſervation, but only he who obſerves it, the day being but a mark of the appointed time. For by the Scriptures ſilence in this particular, it is plain that the choice of Feſtivals was left to the Church, which may determine what days ſhe pleaſes, and alter them at will. And therefore as the ſtated times in the *Jewiſh* Church were ſanctify'd by Gods appointment, and did for that reaſon bind up the Conſcience to a preciſe obſervation of them : So becauſe they that are under the Chriſtian Oeconomy are left to mans diſcretion, they do no otherwiſe concern

cern the Conſcience, than in regard of Scandal and Contempt of Authority. *Leſt the uncertainty of Peoples meeting ſhould prove prejudicial to the Faith in* Chriſt, *particular days were ſet apart for Chriſtian Aſſemblies; not that there is any excellency in the day it ſelf, on which we come together*, ſays Saint *Hierome* upon the *Galatians.*

Secondly. Our other conſideration is to be, how we may beſt carry on this part of Diſcipline. And this muſt be done, as to the bare Obſervation of it, according to the Laws and Uſages of our Church. But then we are at liberty to improve it

it by ſuch Methods of Exhortation, as we Judge moſt edifying. And in my Opinion none can be more likely to do good then explaining whatever Myſtery or Commemoration it is, that the day relates to and having fully ſet forth, or unfolded the matter to preſs it home by a Conſcientious application. Some Homilies are very proper for ſome certain days; but that which will be of moſt conſtant uſe, is expounding the Goſpel for the day; whereby the Hiſtory of the preſent Subject may be fully laid open.

And yet to our grief, at leaſt, if not to our ſhame, we have

harder a Task to perform before we come to Church; That is, to prevail with the People to meet us there.

The easiest and most gentle way of perswasion is most suitable to the Spirit of Christianity, and most agreeable to the rational part of the World, *Let the same mind be in you, that was in* Christ Jesus, *Phil.* 2. 5. Who in a meek and lowly conversation came to *seek, and to save that which was lost.* This is the mind of God, as you may see by what he says concerning *Israel. I drew them with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love.* Hos. 11. 4. And that

which will make this and all other Religious Duties easy and pleasant to our Flocks, is to possess them with a true sense and value of things above, and to convince them of the inconsistency of disorderly walking, whether through spiritual Pride or carnal affections, with true devotion. If our People would be prevail'd upon to bestow some of those precious hours they wast at Tipling houses in frequenting this Ordinance, I make no question they would soon tast and see the difference to their comfort.

But if men will be obstinate in their Prophaness, God has not appointed Authority in

vain.

vain. It is in the power of the Civil Magiſtrate to make ſuch uneaſy Laws paſs upon Offenders of this kind, as well the Entertainers as the Gueſts; that a due Execution of them, would in all probability contribute very much to a Reformation in this particular. Neither are we always to forbear the power which God has given us, but as Chriſt *drove the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*, and as his Bleſſed Apoſtle Saint *Paul*, *deliver'd the inceſtuous Corinthian unto Satan for the Deſtruction of Fleſh, that the Spirit might be ſaved in the day of the Lord* Jeſus, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. So ought we to paſs Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures upon ſuch as will not

amend by fair means. The Pſalmiſt does moſt emphatically deſcribe the patient proceeding of God in this caſe, *Pſal.* 7. 12. *If the Wicked will not turn, he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow, and made it ready.* Obſerve the goodneſs of God even in his advance to ſeverity: obſerve and imitate. I will conclude with the advice of Saint *Cyprian* in his Epiſtle to *Rogatianus* Biſhop of *Noba. This perſon, and if there be any more ſuch, who Act any thing againſt their Paſtor, you may either prohibit or Excommunicate him. Unleſs, which is my Counſel and Advice, you could rather by ſome fair meansmake them ſenſible*

ble of their Fault, ſo as to give ſatisfaction, and ſuffer us to go on in our purpoſe: For we had much rather overcome Reproaches & Injuries by the mildneſs of Patience, than by our Paſtoral Power.

Go on then with that Patience and Courage as becomes a true Shepherd, and beware that you fall not under the condemnation of a Hireling, who cares not for the Flock. As a good Steward watch and provide for thoſe that are committed to your charge. Be not wanton with, nor abuſe your Sheep, neither be ſlothful and negligent, nor flee when the Wolf comes; but conſider the

the example set before us by the Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls; and be not discouraged with the difficulty or danger of your work, *for as much as your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* I pray God direct you in all things, and

Your most assured

Friend and Brother,

H. London

Fulham,
April, 18.

FINIS.